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**It's easy enough to be pleasant
When life flows along like a song,
But the man worth while
Is the man who can smile,
When everything goes dead wrong.**

To Our Subscribers—*Our subscribers are reminded to remit their subscriptions to the Hon. Managing Editor, Wealth & Welfare, Madras-Thyagarayanagar.*—Editor, W. & W.

EDITORIAL

The Role of Medical Men in National Progress

(Sri Swami Sivananda D. L.)

Dignity Of Medical Calling

The will to serve is the noblest power in the region of human activity. Under the alchemizing and galvanizing power of this will to serve, of this extension and dynamism of our altruistic nature, every beneficial and redeeming factor in the many reaches of our consciousness, stand enlivened and illuminated, our entire character undergoes a radical change, and our whole life experiences an upliftment by chastening and refining principles. This phenomenon of the will to serve, accompanied by its retinue of a considerate understanding, an unquestioning sympathetic love, and tireless effort, has evoked for medical men, from the heart of a grateful humanity, the verdict: "Such doctors are Angels."

The will to serve and its impelling force, empowered Galton to ascend into a whirl of activity as a surgeon to the gladiators and physician to the Emperor Marcus Aurelius, and as a prolific writer on medicine who wrote not less than three hundred volumes. The same will to serve stirred and moved the affections of Miss Florence Nightingale to subject and yoke herself to endless hardship in relieving the physical miseries of thousands, and to raise nursing to the dignity of a branch of medicine and a profession in itself.

In our own times, moved by the same will to serve, Dr. Albert Schweitzer renounced his "position of professor in the University of Strasbourg, his literary work, and his organ-playing," studied medicine, received M. D., and applied himself with unabating zeal to assuage the pains of the groaning Lazarus in Equatorial Africa. Today, India and I are happiest witnesses to dozens of doctors of an essentially angelic disposition, devoting every unit of their energy, intelligence, skill, and will to an unremitting ministration to the needs of the depressed, the sick and the diseased.

Relation of Medical Service to Yoga

The genius of the Bhagavat Gita has, for the first time in the ancient history of the practical. spiritual and philosophical literature of the world, erected a magnificent structure of Yoga on the foundations of this will to serve, this inalienable impulse in human nature to action that sometimes assumes the character of a profession. The governance of the temper of our mind, the tenor of our life's expressions and action by the illuminating and transforming thought of the Gita, renders the whole course of our individual, domestic, social and professional medical life into a harmonious, happy and luminous process of spiritual discipline, self-enlightenment, self-unfoldment and a dynamic realization of all the powers and riches laden in the inner reaches of our essential consciousness.

Contemporary parapsychological literature as presented in the works of Dr. Rhine of Duke University (U.S.A.), makes difficult all disbelief of the sceptical mind in the existence of supernormal faculties and principles latent in

the inner mental consciousness of the human being. But to the Indian, who has imbibed the wisdom of the Gita and the Patanjali Sutras and other literature on spiritual psychology, the present psychical literature, bearing the knowledge of the outer fringes of the inner divine Consciousness, carries only insufficient enlightenment.

All action controlled and guided by goodness, magnanimity, nobility, genuine love and a spirit of sacrifice; result in the possession of an active mental peace, a powerful personality and a noble success in lucrative life; added to these immediate results, such an action goes a long way in liberating our mind and nature from the hold of egoistic tendencies, personal desire and unregenerate forces. Service animate with an attitude of Faith, service informed with a sense of the Presence of an omnipresent Power, far transcending our powers, becomes an unfailing means for a full deployment of the Divine Nature and its constituting power dormant within us.

The superior type of the will to serve as manifest in medical men, a chastened psychological insight argues, is the action of a specific attribute of the all-pervading Energy of the Divine Being. The tendency to minister to the sick was the strongest trait in the character of the Buddha; the full manifestation of Christ-Consciousness was preceded by the activity of a general physician of transcendental powers. Down through the ages, the traditions of human experience around the world, bear testimony to the fact that untiring attendance on the sick, ministering to the needy, healing the wounded, constituted an indispensable preliminary function of the noblest out-flowerings of human nature, saints and mystics. Medical service thus bears a very close affinity to Yoga and spiritual action.

Doctors do not make merely columns of enthusiastic energy and trained power for affording medical relief; they form centres of civilizing force and wield ennobling power on the minds and character of men around them; what is more, there are among them, many silent saints of unusual power and influence. On their personal qualities individual moral excellences and the most elegant demeanour, depends the measure of happiness of their patients. The profundity of their respect for human nature, the warmth of their sympathy for the suffering, the power of their patience in rendering meticulously attentive service, the sweetness of their speech, to this day, brook no rivals in other fields of profession.

Medical Men And National Progress

India's happy social life, economic prosperity based on increased human efficiency and industry, our national programme of development in various fields of life and our cultural activity, are intimately bound up with the dynamic efforts that are required of our medical men and women. The greater the efforts made to increase and conserve human wealth in our country, the greater will be the progress of our Nation. There is no exaggerating the value of health for the rise of India in the comity of nations. The importance of health is summed up in such common-place statements, as, "Health is wealth", "If health is gone, everything is lost". Charak Maharishi tells us that health is the best cause of moral nature, economic achievement, happy living, and spiritual freedom. The political independence of India has devolved on our medical men and women fresh and special duties; and the appeal of the Nation's progress is to their abilities, skill, talent, enthusiasm and spirit of sacrifice!

MISCELLANEOUS

A GLORIOUS CHAPTER IN INDIA'S FREEDOM STRUGGLE

By Sri A. Rangaswami Aiyar

(Sometime Vice-President of National Home Rule League)

(Continued from Previous Issue)

Vigorous activities were appearing from day to day, some times signed leading articles from the pen of Dr. Besant were appearing in the columns of her daily *New India* upholding the claims of India to Swaraj. The Government were alarmed at the new persistent method of agitation adopted by Dr. Besant and wanted to repress the upswelling tide of popular excitement. Her press publishing 'New India' was repeatedly called upon to furnish higher and higher securities under the Press Act and she contested in the Madras High Court the validity of such orders and the forfeiture of the securities she furnished. The publicity of the proceedings which she conducted in person in the High Court simply intensified the agitation for Home Rule. Various branches of the Home Rule League were formed in the different parts of the country. To bring about the reproachment of the Congress and the Muslim League closer together both held their annual Sessions in Lucknow in December, 1916 and the Congress-League Reforms were formulated to which both moderate and extremist wings of the Congress were parties as well as Muslim League. In Easter 1916, South Indian Political Conference was held at Cuddalore in which Dr. Besant took a prominent part. Madras Government with Lord Pentland at their head were panic stricken and it was reported she was asked to leave the shores of India. She is said to have refused declaring that her stay in India was essential for her work.

On 16th June, 1917 she and her political co-workers G. S. Arundale and B. P. Wadia were under orders of Madras Government interned in Ootacamund and prevented from indulging in political propaganda and writing to their paper. A huge protest meeting was held in Madras, to which representatives from the Districts came, with similar protest meetings and processions in different places in the Province. On 16th of every succeeding month large processions and protest meetings were organized in important towns in the Province. Dr. Besant's internment operated as a powerful factor in increasing the strength of the movement for Home Rule not only in India but also in United States and in the Dominions of the Commonwealth, as Dr. Besant wielded considerable influence as a world figure. Thus was found by Government that Mrs. Besant under internment was not less powerful as an agitator for Home Rule for India than when she was free. President Wilson of America made diplomatic representations to British Government against her internment owing to the pressure of public opinion in United States. Then came the proclamation of British Government through the Secretary of State for India and the Viceroy Lord Chelmsford dated 20th August, 1917 that self-government with which Government of India was in complete accord was the gradual development of self-governing institutions with a view to the progressive realization of responsible Government in India, as an integral part of British Empire, and that the stages of which would be determined by Britain, and that substantial steps in this direction would be taken as soon as possible. The Secretary of State Mr. Montagu and the Viceroy toured the country and made their report containing their proposals of reforms. The public opinion in India considered the announcement of 20th

August, 1917 as disappointing and dissatisfactory. Dr. Besant had co-workers in England like Major Graham Pole and others and many sympathisers in America and other parts of the world. She and her colleagues were released from internment in August, 1917 and her work in hastening the reforms was recognized by the public and she was elected President of next succeeding Congress amidst great enthusiasm which held its sessions in Calcutta in December, 1917. As President of the Congress she considered that her work did not end with her presiding over the Congress Sessions but that she should carry on her duties in that capacity during the whole year of 1918 until the next Congress was held in Delhi in December, 1918. She worked incessantly going round the country rousing the enthusiasm of the people in support of Home Rule. Montagu Chelmsford proposals proposed Dyarchy in the Provinces leaving the Central Government untouched. There was a section amongst the moderates who welcomed the Reforms proposed in the Montagu Chelmsford Report. A special Congress was held in August, 1918 in Bombay in which the Moderates and the Extremists came to a compromise which modified the Montagu-Chelmsford proposals by resolving that full responsible Government should be introduced in the Provinces and that for a period of 6 years the Department of Law, Justice, and Police, Prisons excepted, might be reserved subjects, and the rest should be administered by popular ministers in the centre. In the Congress of 1918 in Delhi, Dr. Besant proposed Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya as President. She pleaded for unity amongst our people, against which all the reactionary forces in England and India would be powerless. In that Congress in Delhi, full responsible Government was demanded for the Provinces and that a statute should be passed immediately for the establishment of full responsible Government in India, the full measure of which should be attained within a time to be fixed in the statute itself, at an early date, and that the Congress League Scheme should be immediately introduced by statute as a first step in the process of introducing Responsible Government in the Centre. In the Congress Session of 1918 Dr. Besant though agreeing that the Montague Chelmsford Reforms were disappointing and unsatisfactory, yet proposed that they should be worked for what they were worth, and with their aid further reforms should be striving for and attained.

Gandhiji came to India from South Africa with a distinction of organizing passive resistance movement for redressing the grievance of British Indians in that country against the oppressive treatment by the white government. He had previously appeared in the 17th Session of the Indian National Congress in Calcutta in 1901 as a Petitioner on behalf of hundred thousand Indians in South Africa and moved a resolution relating to their grievances in the Congress Session in Lahore in 1909 and Gopala Krishna Gokhale moved the resolutions for rendering help to Indians in that country in their long and patient struggle led by Gandhiji. After his arrival in India he gained great popularity by his self-sacrificing labour on behalf of the labourers in Indigo Estates in Behar and in dedicating his life for the masses. He applied the principle of absolute Ahimsa or nonviolence for the attainment of political objects, that principle which is enshrined in Hinduism from time immemorial as well as in Jainism and Buddhism though not applied for attainment of political objects. Gandhiji paid also due regard to the principle of nonviolence enunciated in the Sermon of the Mount. He now said that by adoption of his passive resistance method which later came to be known as Satyagraha, as Gandhiji insisted that Truth and Nonviolence should both be practised by those joining the movement, and that India could obtain full responsible Government by peaceful means. This movement aimed at paralysing Government by non-co-operating with it in all its functions by boycotting Legislative Councils, Local Boards and Municipal Councils, by calling upon public servants to abstain from performance of their public duties, by calling upon lawyers to cease from practising in courts, calling upon people to disobey laws and court prosecutions and suffer imprisonment and sale of their properties, in consequence of nonpayment of taxes, and similar methods thereby compelling the Government to agree to the demand for Swaraj. After the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms were placed on the statute book, the elected members of the Legislature who joined the movement abstained from taking part in their legislative functions. The movement spread in consequence of repeated prosecutions of the offenders by Government. Government passed repressive laws. But after Gandhiji started his Civil Disobedience movement and proclaimed Ahimsa and Truth as his weapons, the terrorist movement languished and gradually lost its strength. Dr. Besant set herself strongly against Gandhiji's Civil Disobedience Movement later called Satyagraha while she was carrying on an intensive agitation for Home rule as she was firmly of the view that regard for law and order would be weakened if laws were generally disobeyed apart from their being chosen for disobedience by general consent on account of their oppressive character, and chaos and anarchy would be the result whatever be the Reforms the Government introduced. She was of the view that even though unsatisfactory and disappointing they should be utilized for obtaining full Swaraj. Although theoretically Dr. Besant like Aurobindo Ghose was not opposed to the view that a subject nation would be justified in using force for attaining independence, she thought that in India it would be folly for the people who were unarmed and disorganized and divided into opposite camps like Hindus and Muslims to try to secure independence by rising in rebellion as the British would certainly quell it by force and untold suffering would be inflicted on the people as it happened after the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857. Charles Bradlaugh under whom Dr. Besant had her political experience was an upholder of attaining political liberty by constitutional means i.e., by actions, within the law. On 3rd August 1881 Charles Bradlaugh who was elected member of Parliament by the constituency of Northampton wanted to enter the House in spite of the vast police precautions to prevent him from entering and taking his seat. Hundreds of petitioners went with their petitions in support of Bradlaugh and reached Westminister Hall where they waited on the steps leading to the passage to the lobby. Before Bradlaugh went into the House, he told Mrs. Besant that "people know you better than they know any one save myself; whatever happens, let them do no violence; I trust you to keep them quiet". Gradually the crowd of petitioners grew and grew. The numerous crowd crying 'Petition, Petition, Justice Justice', surged up the steps charging the Policemen who held the door. As the Police sprang forward to meet the crowd, Mr. Besant threw herself against them, and with all the advantage of the position of the top of the steps which she had chosen so that everyone in the charging crowd saw her, she bade them to stop for his sake, and keep for him the peace which he had bade her should not be broken. The men drew back sullenly mastering themselves with efforts, reining in their wrath still for Bradlaugh's sake. The Police and ushers flung him out. There outside the gate was a vast sea of heads longing to leap to his side. But he asked them to disperse quietly saying "No riots. No disorder". With that experience she opposed the Civil Disobedience movement. But it spread in India by the repeated prosecutions of the offenders by Government. The Government passed repressive measures. Mrs. Besant while losing her immense popularity amongst the people by raising her emphatic voice against the Civil Disobedience Movement as it will induce disregard for law and order was pressing for further reforms till full Swaraj was won. The years between 1920 and 1930 saw the operation of the Civil Disobedience Movement for Swaraj in full force. There were disturbances in the country owing to the spread of the Civil Disobedience or passive resistance or satyagraha movement in which some policemen were thrown into fire at Chauri Chowra which made Gandhiji at times style his action as 'Himalayan blunder'. Mr. Besant wanted that India should attain Dominion Status by the methods with which British people were familiar and which Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa adopted and attained that status not without

struggle, and that India should present a Swaraj scheme not imposed by Britain but framed by India's representatives to the British Parliament which would not dare to refuse. She knew that Britain did not yield readily to the demands of her own Colonists in those countries untill she was obliged to recognize the full strength of those movements and came to accept the scheme of full self government presented by them. Undeterred by the negative movement of Non-coperation, Mrs. Besant carried on the work of agitating for Home Rule even after sharp divisions had occurred between her and leading members of Home Rule League on the resolution passed at the Congress Session in Delhi in 1918. Joint work between them became impossible. The Home Rule League decided for discontinuance of any deputation to England for propaganda on behalf of introducing improvements in the projected Reform Bill based on Montague-Chelmsford proposals for fear of its being considered as a rival to the Congress Deputation. Then at the request of earnest friends, she founded the National Home Rule League in April 1919 as whose representative, she gave evidence before the Committee of inquiry presided over by Lord Selborne which was constituted by Parliament, and presented before it the aim of National Home Rule League as being ready to work with other bodies with Home Rule as their goal working in all law-abiding ways pressing for all modifications in the bill based on Montagu-Chelmsford proposals as resolved both by the Congress and the Moderate Conference held in Bombay in 1918.

After general elections which followed the introduction of the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms, the Congress party boycotted the Legislatures. After a time some members of the Congress Party dissatisfied with the negative results from such a policy of abstention separated from the Congress and formed the Swaraj Party under the leadership of Chitta Ranjan Das. The National Home Rule League under the leadership of Dr. Besant though it differed from the policy of the Congress was striving to work in co-operation with it.

A strong Deputation was sent to England on behalf of National Home Rule League consisting of its President Dr. Besant, B. P. Wadia, P. K. Telang and Jamnadas Dwarka Das, to educate public opinion there in favour of Indian Reforms with Home Rule for India as goal, and to enlarge and improve the Government of India Bill. It was open to all who had Home Rule as their goal and stood for the Free Nationhood of India in the British Commonwealth of Nations which Dr. Besant styled as Indo-British Commonwealth.

The active progaganda work of the League consisted in giving lectures in different places, publication of literature and activities through the Press. A branch of the League called British Auxiliary of Home Rule for India League was started in England with Mr. George Lansbury as chairman and Mr. John Scurr as secretary. Lady Muriel, Countess De la Warr, and Miss Barbara Villiers gave notable help along with Lady Emily Lutyens, Mr. George Barnard Shaw, Mr. & Mrs. Philip Snowden as members of council. An Indian Parliamentary Committee was formed in England with Mrs. Besant as Chairman, Messrs. John Scurr and B. P. Wadia as secretaries and a council in which several M. P.'s were council members with 152 corresponding members scattered over the boroughs of England, Scotland and Wales, through whom the League sent out literature and information who arranged meetings, spread interest about India, and acted as centres for Indian news, and through whom pamphlets were circulated, which met weekly consisting of 188 central and corresponding members with nearly 300 Labour Associations and Trade Unions affiliated. She invited Congress and Moderate Deputations to join her in her work in England, and several of the former worked with her though unofficially. She started in England a small private company for the foundation of a weekly newspaper called 'United India'. It was sent to every member of the house of Commons and to a selected list of House of Lords members and sent also to 20 Indian newspapers every week. A weekly edition of New India was published in India to give more direct Indian news to people in England, America and the Dominions. Mr. Tata and Mrs. Tata were introduced to English audiences as representatives of Indian womanhood to present the case on behalf of Indian women. A meeting attended by 60 members of Parliament was arranged in a Committee Room of the house of Commons at which addresses were given by Hon'ble V. S. Srinivasa Sastri of the Liberal Deputation, Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar of all India Home Rule League, Mr. M. A. Jinnah of Muslim League and Mrs. Besant of National Home Rule League Deputation. National Home Rule Deputation visited several cities and towns in England and Scotland and gave political lectures in support of Indian Reforms. The following places were visited: Various parts of London, Southport, Edinburgh (twice), Glasgow (twice), Bow, Stratford, Croydon, Battersea (thrice), Brighton, Preston, Liverpool, Wellasley, Wigaru Rochdale, Burnby, Bolton, Manchester Free Trade Hall, and Oxford, Bredford, Harrogate, York, New Castle, Stone, Cardiff, Bristol, Bath, Leeds, and Harrow. Articles were written to several London papers, interviews were given to the Press, and generally every opportunity was taken to put India's case. The Deputation was received by Mr. Montague, Secretary of State for India at the India office and there was a ladies Deputation organised by Mrs. Sarojini Naidu which included Mrs. Besant. A great meeting was held in Free Trade Hall Manchester at which Mrs. Besant spoke, a big meeting in the Queen's Hall London and a lecture in the Kingsway Hall, London, under the auspices of the Fabian Society in support of Indian Reforms. Many questions were asked in Parliament by members belonging to the Parliamentary Committee. Their work was to draw attention of their local M. P's to any approaching Indian matter in the House of Commons and urge his attention to it and his vote on the side of reforms or where needed redress of wrong governmental action, influence residents of locality to write in a similar sense, to circulate information sent to them by the Central Committee to correct untrue statements about India made in the local Press and write to it in favour of reforms and answering objections and generally to give and help and take any useful action in regard to urging on the British public their duty towards India. Between 200 Trade Unions and Labour Organizations were affiliated to the Committee to help in agitation for India's freedom, to put pressure on members of Parliament to vote for India's freedom and Indian interests and on Parliamentary candidates to promise to support Indian freedom and Indian interests. This was due to the work of Mr. John Scurr. Meetings were organised in England by several women's Societies, Britain and India League and various, Labour Organizations. Mrs. Besant addressed the famous Pioneer Club (believed to be the 1st women's club) and various women's societies, a Labour Conference at Southport and a meeting of Home Rule for Scotland League. Articles were written in several London papers, interviews were given to the Press and every opportunity was taken to put India's case. Several At Homes were given to the more fashionable section of society.

After the Amritsar Congress of 1919 Mrs. Besant made several tours lecturing on the reforms in different parts of India. Thousands of copies of Sir Sankaran Nair's minute of dissent to Government of India's proposals of Reforms and of the minute of dissent of Prof. Keith to the Report of the Crewe Commission, and National Home Rule League pamphlets Nos. 1 to 15, Election programme for 1920 for which pledges of support were taken from candidates for election to Legislatures, and other pamphlets were printed and published in English, Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam and other vernaculars. 25 branches of National Home Rule League were formed in Madras, 45 in Andra Desha, 9 in Malabar, 13 in Bombay Province and 2 in Sindh. A few branches were established in Bengal, Behar, United Provinces and Delhi. Co-operation for propaganda and election purposes were established with Deccan Sabha, Poona Liberal League, Poona, Servants of India Society and some progressive members of the Madras Liberal League. Friendly relations were established with the Bombay Branch of the All India Home Rule League. A Conference of the National Home Rule League was held at

Bombay on 5th April 1920. It was resolved to form a Provincial Council in Bombay and that Councils should be formed for Madras and Andhra Provinces. Election programme for 1920 as regards Indian Legislature and Provincial Legislatures was settled. At the Annual meeting of National Home Rule League it was decided that co-operation with Societies having similar objects should be made one of the objects of the League. The National Home Rule League, Madras Branch in a meeting held on 26th October 1919 protested against the introduction of an Indemnity Bill during the then current session of the Imperial Legislative Council to cover the actions of those concerned in dealing with the occurences in the Punjab and resolved that a Royal Commission is the proper machinery for conducting the promised inquiries into the occurrences in the Punjab which must necessarily involve an examination into the Acts of the Government of India and that the appointment of a committee by the Government of India to report to themselves is therefore not calculated, by the very necessities of the case, to inspire public confidence or to achieve the ends of justice. The occurrences related to the shooting of hundreds of unarmed people in the Jallianwala Park in Amritsar and other events which increased the bitterness of the popular feeling against the Government and Lala Lajput Rai was assaulted by the Police and he died soon after.

In September 1920 the British Auxiliary of the National Home Rule for India League was dissolved as India had her feet set on the road to Home Rule by the Reforms Act and her progress depended on herself and the special work of the League was finished.

There was a New Zealand and India League affiliated to the National Home Rule League with Annual Conferences in second of which held in 1st January 1920 Mr. C. Jinarajadasa was present and gave an illuminating address. Pamphlets were distributed to members over 30 different centres accompanied by a request to post copies to local M. Ps. editors, clergymen, school teachers and prominent labour men.

There was a similar auxiliary organized in Australia in which Senator Reid was constantly at work raising questions in the Federal Senate.

For Canada and South Africa there were representatives working who brought India before the public.

Besides there was British India Union with H. R. H. Duke of Connaught as its head which though purely a social organisation yet exercised a profound influence on public opinion in England and indirectly or Houses of Parliament.

While the Delhi Congress of 1918 and Amritsar Congress of 1919 made a limit of 15 years for the complete establishment of Home Rule for India, Dr. Besant aimed at brining it within a shorter time. Some members of the National Home Rule League were returned to the Local and Central Legislative Councils.

She associated both with the Indian National Congress and South Indian Liberal Federation and the Muslim League for forming a common platform for achieving Indian freedom. For this purpose an executive committee was elected at Simla on 12-9-1922 at a joint meeting of members of 2 houses of Indian Legislature who approved of the calling of a National Convention after the general election at the end of 1923.

The Reform Act of 1919 was the work of British Government. But the constructive work of Dr. Annie Besant aimed at framing a Swaraj Constitution for India by Indians to be introduced into British Parliament and passed by it, so that it would be the last occasion to seek British Parliamentary legislation for India, as after the passing of the statute marking the attainment of Independence by India, India would be entitled to pass her own laws independent of British Parliament. This was the method adopted by the several colonies in the British Empire for the attaiment of their political freedom. Thereafter they became independent of British Parliament. This is a procedure which had become familiar to British Democracy during the preceding decades and it was hoped that it would be easily understood and accepted. The Swaraj Constitution had to be framed by India at a National Convention to be convened for the purpose.

For this purpose, the Executive Committee elected at Simla on 12-9-1922 sent circulars to member of the Indian Legilslature, members of Provincial Councils, Presidents, Vice-Presidents & Chairmen and members of Local Boards and Municipal Corporations, members of National Home Rule League, 1921 clubs, other political associations and well known public workers to meet in a National Conference at Delhi for framing a programme in order to obtain Dominion status for the Commonwealth of India in her external relations, and Swaraj in her internal affairs.

The National Conference met on 12th and 13th February 1923 in the Hall of Eastern Rostel of the Central Legislature at Raisina (New Delhi) with 67 members of the Indian Legislature, 76 members of Provincial Councils, 34 elected Presidents, Vice Presidents, Chairmen and members of Local Boards and Municipalities, 40 elected members of National Home Rule League, 16 elected members of 1921 clubs, 16 elected members of other political associations and 19 well-known public workers. The conveners were Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, Sir Sivaswami Ayyar, Rt. Hon. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri, Hon'ble Mr. Purushottamdas Thakurdas, and Dr. H. S. Gour, with Dr. Annie Besant as General Secretary.

The Conference outlined the essentials of a free Constitution. No political question was touched save the attainment of Dominion status, Home Rule or Swaraj, so that men of all parties, save those who took as their platform the wrecking of the Reforms, while preserving their indenpendence. The programme was one pointed, a Provincial Government wholly of responsible to an elected legislature, and a Federal Government responsbile to an elected legislature in all civil internal affairs, Army and Navy to be taken over, when it declared itself ready to assume responsibility for their control and maintenance, in Foreign affairs to have the status of other Dominions. A National Convention of members of Legislature with power to co-opt wa to draft the constitution. To prepare materials for this work and popularise the idea was this year's objective. To this end, five committees were appointed on Reforms, Defence, Indianisation of the services, Finance and Taxation, and Supreme Court. A book called "The work of the Indian Legislatures" of 312 pages was compiled under the order of the Conference which also contained the result of the work of four of the Committees, and also a pamphlet on what the Labour Party can do for India was prepared. They were circulated. Every Home Rule Candidate for the Legislature Elections of 1923 took the Conference pledge which was as follows :—"I pledge myself if elected to help in the forming of a National Convention to be composed of members who have received a mandate to frame a Constitution for India embodying Dominion Status". 18 pamphlets were issued dealing chiefly with the valuable legislative results derived from the work of the Reformed Councils and with the further changes which should be brought about by the next Legislatures. A monthly Conference Bulletin was also issued from 17-4-1923 of which 14 numbers were published, 12 monthly and 2 special numbers at the time of the elections. 2 small journals one in Tamil and the other in Malayalam were circulated. Pamphlets were published in Tamil, Marathi, Guzerati, Hindi, Sindi and several in Malayalam. A number of pamphlets published by the National Home Rule League was also circulated. The President, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru who went to England as the representative of the India Government at the Imperial Conference did splendid work for India. Rt. Hon. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri both in Britain and in his Dominion tour and Sri Jamnadas Dwarakadas while on deputation in Britain also did similar work.

The 2nd year National Conference met at Raisina (New Delhi) on 22nd and 23rd February, 1924 in the same Hall in Eastern Hostel. About 200 persons were present. Sir Tej

Bahadur Sapru took the chair. Dr. H. S. Gour proposed Dr. Besant as General Secretary for the year and said, "I am sure that when the work of the Convention is fulfilled and achieved she will live in our hearts as a lady who has done far more for the emancipation of the people of this country than any political thinker or statesman of our race and blood, who has striven and worked for the achievement of the self government for India". Sir Bipin Chunder Pal seconded saying that "she was one of those few persons who work in this world with the perpetual consciousness of a power, not of themselves, inspiring them from within and from behind, and from above and has always believed in these personalities. No defeat can daunt, no disappointment can depress her. In standing single-handed she is always with God". Dr. Besant thanked for being elected as General Secretary and said that it was not another country that she was working for but for her own as Motherland. Rt. Hon. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri was elected Vice-President. The following resolution was passed:

"This Conference having regard to the keen and widespread desire in the country for the immediate revision of the Government of India Act, so as to secure full responsibility of the Executive to the Legislature both in the Provincial and Central Legislatures, regrets the attitude of the Government in this matter, and urges that His Majesty's Government should lose no time in appointing a Commission fully representing all shades of opinion and interest in India, so that immediate measures may be taken for the establishment of full Responsible Government in the Provinces, and the transference of all departments at present administered by the Governor-General in Council, to a Cabinet responsible to the elected Legislature except Foreign affairs including relations with the Indian States, and the Defence of the country, suitable provision being made to place the latter Department under the control of the Indian Legislature as early as practicable, such provision to include steps to be taken in the meanwhile to bring the subject of Indianisation of the Army, the Territorial and Auxiliary Forces more under the influence of the Central Legislature".

The Conference appointed Dr. Sapru, Dr. Annie Besant and Rt. Hon. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri with the hope of adding a few more when the time came, as members of a deputation to England to work for the furtherance of the objects mentioned in the above resolutions, and resolved that the Convention should meet for its first session on the 22nd and 23rd April, 1924 and on such other dates as may be necessary, at Allahabad.

The National Conference published 18 pamphlets which had wide circulation of which the first was a soul-stirring exhortation to Indians entitled "Organize! Organize!". The third was "what is the National Conference? What is its object? What is it doing to gain at? and 15th was "Self determination and self government", all the three by Dr. Besant.

The Conservative Government in Britain sustained a reverse at an unexpected election precipitated by itself and the Labour Party which was friendly to India and which was believed to be far off from power suddenly came into office though the Labour Government was not secure of a majority in the House of Commons. In the Imperial Legislative Council, a proposal for the appointment of a Royal Commission to inquire into the subject of Reforms was rejected though a resolution asking for a Round Table Conference to be appointed by Government for drafting Indian Constitution was passed.

But the National Conference wanted to have India's Constitution to be framed at a National Convention. A public meeting was held in Gokhale Hall, Madras, on 15th March, 1924 under the auspices of the National Conference to familiarise the public with the work to be accomplished by the National Convention. A National Convention Bulletin was published under the editorship of Dr. Besant, the General Secretary and widely circulated, from April 1924 to October 1924.

The National Convention consisted of about 250 members, 222 of them being past or present members of the Legislatures of whom 12 were members of Council of State, 13 were members of Bengal Legislative Assembly, 2 of Assam, 15 of Bombay, 2 of Burma, 1 of Central Provinces, 7 of Bihar and Orissa, 15 of Madras, 1 of North West Frontier Province, 7 of Punjab, 10 of United Provinces, 7 were members of Assam Legislative Council, 3 of Bengal, 4 of Bihar and Orissa, 36 of Bombay, 5 of Central Provinces, 52 of Madras, 2 of Punjab and 28 of United Provinces, and 23 being members of the Council of the National Home Rule League with over 100 branches in India, one member representing the Women's Indian Association, and one member for each of the Political sections of the three 1921 Clubs, in Madras, Bombay and Calicut.

The Convention was established at Allahabad on 22–4–'24. It met and formed the 7 great departments of the Commonwealth of India Act with respective committees whose reports formed the basis of the considered decision of the whole Convention. These Committees were formed for reporting about (1) Executive Government, (2) Legislatures, (3) Judicial and Legal, (4) Protection of minorities, (5) Franchise for Central and Provincial Legislatures and for local Boards, (6) Finance and Taxation, (7) Relations of Central and Provincial Governments. The following members were elected for deputation to England:—(1) President, (2) Vice-President, (3) General Secretary, (4) Iswaran Saran, (5) Kanji Dwarakadas and (6) R. K. Shanmukham Chettiar.

A National Convention Deputation consisting of Dr. Besant, The Lady Emily Lutyens, Rt. Hon. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri and Mr. Munshi Iswar Saran sailed for England on 26–4–1924 to work for the furtherance of the objects mentioned in the principal resolution passed at the Conference. The first batch of the members of the Deputation were given a send off at a public meeting in Bombay on 24th April, 1924 at which Sir Chimanlal Setalwad took the chair. The first batch was to sail for England on 26th April 1924, the second on 10th May 1924 and others later as occasion arises. Dr. Annie Besant divided the activities of the Deputation in England into 3 kinds. First, lectures and usual discussions, second, large demonstrations in Queen's Hall, London, and Free Trade Hall, Manchester, to influence public opinion in England, special meetings with the Indian Parliamentary Committees through which members of the House of Commons were to be addressed, third, interviews with the members of the Government.

The Deputation presented a memorandum making a united demand for Dominion Home Rule for India signed by Dr. Besant, Rt. Hon. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri, Mr. Iswar Saran, Sir Ali Inam, Sir K. G. Gupta and others to the India Office, claiming amongst other matters that India should draft her own constitution in the same way as the Dominions and the Irish Free State did and that the Central Government should be carried on by the Viceroy with a cabinet responsible to the Indian Legislature, the Defence of the country remaining in the hands of the Viceroy, subject to agreed reservation, until the responsible Government of India was ready to take it over, and Foreign Affairs including relations with

Indian Princes secured by treaties being left with the Viceroy, and that the Provincial Government should be autonomous with a cabinet responsible to the elected legislatures and a High Court controlling the judiciary. The signatories believed that the safety of the connection between Britain and India depended on the establishment of Dominion Home Rule in India as quickly as possible and that it was desirable that a commission should be sent to India in the coming autumn with wide terms of reference.

The public campaign in England was opened in Bradford by a big meeting in St. George's Hall, presided over by H. C. Charleston, M.P. at which Dr. Besant, Rt. Hon. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri and Mr. Iswar Saran spoke. There was a grand demonstration in Queen's Hall, London, on 25-6-1924 in favour of 'Indian Dominion' presided over by Mr. Robert Smithie, M.P. Interviews, articles in the daily papers, Lectures, private talks, persuasions of members of Parliament to support the Dominion Home Rule Bill when it would come to Parliament—all methods and means for ensuring success of the Bill when the Indian National Convention would send it to Parliament were employed with considerable success. Dr. Besant spoke, with Rt. Hon. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri at Cary Hall, Cardiff, on 'India—a Dominion'. She addressed other public meetings one in Assembly Rooms, Downing Street, another at Bath, and in the rooms of the Indian Association, Caxton Hall, London, "On the present political position in India". There was a grand Demonstration at the Free Trade Hall, Manchester, on 7-7-1924, at which Mr. Hookway, President of the Manchester Labour Party presided, and Dr. Besant, Rt. Hon. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri, Mr. George Lansbury and Mr. Shanmukham Chetti spoke. Dr. Besant lectured at Folkestone, Rt. Hon. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri spoke in Birmingham Town Hall, Liverpool Rotary Club and Leeds Rotary Club.

Rt. Hon. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri spoke in an interview that "the Deputation made an impression the credit of which must go entirely to the friends and followers of Dr. Besant. Their devotion and personal loyalty to her are marvellous and the cause of India profits by them". Dr. Besant lectured at Sprewsbury in Theatre Royal presided over by Mr. Joseph Sunlight M. P. and in Edinburgh in the Music Hall on the Dominion Home Rule in India on 26-7-1924 at which Major Graham Pole presided. She also gave an address at Oxford. The Deputation held a very large number of meetings in England, Scotland and Wales, many of which were called by the Labour Party. No fewer than 363 Labour Organizations sent up to the Prime Minister and members of Parliament a resolution in support of Dominion Home Rule for India. Weekly meetings were arranged at the house of Lady Muriel, Countess de la Warr. At one of those meetings a declaration was drawn up of the essentials of a Free Constitution for India which was presented to the Secretary of State and the Prime Minister. On 23-7-1924 there was a Demonstration in the Great Queen's Hall in London in honour of Dr. Besant's Fiftieth anniversary on her entry into public life. More than 500 delegates were present representing almost every branch of progressive work in the world, and many organizations sent their representatives. The Premier Mr. Ramsay Macdonald sent his appreciative reply regretting his absence. So also Lord Haldane, Sir Robert Baden Powell, Philip Snowden M. P. and Miss Despard. There were 15 speakers including Rt. Hon. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri who, as he said, laid India's homage at her feet and garlanded her. Mr. Graham Pole M. P. presided.

Dr. Besant left England in August 1924 with the aim of presenting a united front of National Home Rule League, All-India Congress Committee, Swarajya Party, Liberal Federation, National Convention, Muslim League and Independent Party just then formed. She approached Gandhiji who wrote "Congress Constitution has broken down. We have no electorate worth the name. We are almost a self-appointed electorate and self-appointed representatives, since Non-cooperation and Civil Disobedience have broken down". He suggested three things in which all could unite-The Spinning wheel, unity between the different communities and Removal by Hindus of untouchability. He wanted the Congressmen to spin for half an hour a day. Dr. Besant for the sake of unity agreed to spin for half an hour a day if Non-cooperation and Civil Disobedience were suspended and to rejoin the Congress if the Congress which would meet at Belgaum would accept his minimum programme Dr. Besant left for Belgaum taking a spinning wheel with her. The Congress had already passed its own usual resolution even before Dr. Besant could reach the Congress Pandal without reference to the minimum programme to which she had agreed. She returned immediately to Bombay.

She arrived in Simla in September 1924. She had meetings with leaders of all parties, and there was a general feeling that adoption of Non-cooperation and Civil Disobedience and Hindu Muslim disunity were two obstacles to unity and that those should be removed. There was a unity conference in Delhi which Dr. Besant attended in support of Hindu Muslim unity on 26-9-1924 She talked with several leaders including Mr. Chitta Ranjan Das, Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, Pandit Motilal Nehru and Mr. M. R. Jayaker about holding a Round Table Conference in Bombay in November 1924 for drafting a constitution for India.

There was a Reform Inquiry Committee set up by the Government of India to examine the working of the Reforms Act of 1919 and to see what further steps should be taken.

There was now a change in British Government with Tory Government in power. In the agenda of 24th annual conference of the Labour Party in Queen's Hall in London in November 1924, Firsbury Labour Party and Trade Council and two other local Labour Parties brought forward a Resolution that "the Labour Conference is of the opinion that the time has arrived to grant to India a full measure of Home Rule equal in Status to that enjoyed by South Africa and other self governing colonies".

The National Convention brought up 26 memoranda on various aspects of self-government to help in the framing of the Commonwealth of India Bill. The Commonwealth of India Bill which was approved in substance by the Indian National Convention was framed and circulated for public criticism and comments. The aim of Dr. Besant was achieved in having a bill framed by Indians for India to be presented to Parliament for the last time as a Bill as subsequent constitutional changes

would be effected by the Commonwealth Legislature without recourse to British Parliament. Its salient points were that it purported to confer upon India the status of a self governing Dominion. The Council of India was abolished. The Secretary of State for India bad lhe same relation to the Commonwealth of India as the Secretary of State in the British Cabinet had to the Governments of the Dominions. In this Democratic age the European form of Democracy is not the last word on the right form of Democratic Government, Indian genius in the art of Government as it did in social and moral affairs recognized that political responsibility of a voter should go hand in hand with the required political wisdom and knowledge to discharge his political responsibility. The conferment of the right of " one man one vote" to every adult in the Commonwealth irrespeetive of his political knowledge in respect or political subjects ranging from the Central or Imperial problems of Government down to the Provincial, District or local administrations till the village level was reached and coupled with a high perenntage of illiteracy, would not augur well for a sound and wise Government. So in the Commonwealth of India Bill framed, there was prescribed a graded scheme of functions and franchises. That is, it prescribed graduated sets of powers as one ascended from Village Panchayats to Taluka Sabhas, to District Samities (Rural) or Municipal Councils (Urban), to Provincial Legislative Councils, and to the National Parliament at the highest level. Similarly the qualifications of members and electors for the several units were graded for the discharge of their respective responsibilities rising stage by stage. India remained in the Indo-British Commonwealth which is likely to be a nucleus for a world government in a far off future. There was no partition of India in the Bill as at present into India and Pakistan, which had not then risen as a living issue. The Bill was put into Parliamentary form by the then British Attorney General Mr. Slesser (who subsequently became Mr. Justice Slesser). The Bill was presented by Mr. George Lansbury M. P. in the British House of Commons supported by Mr. Snell, Col. Wedgwood, Mr. Bromley, Mr. Charleston, Mr. Haden Guest, Mr. Walter Bake, Mr. Gillett, Mr. Lees Smith, Mr. James Hudson, Mr. Dalton and Mr. Scurr, and was ordered to be printed by the House of Commons on 17-12-1925. It passed through the First Reading in Parliament. But some of the Congress Leaders cabled to England that it was not their bill. It lapsed in the subsequent session of British Parliament.

There was an All Parties Conference held in Bombay joined by different political parties which appointed a committee to seek for ways to draw parties together to bring about Hindu Muslim Unity and outline a scheme of Swaraj. A scheme of Swaraj was ultimately drawn up under the guidance of Pandit Motilal Nehru. And an all Parties Conference was held at Calcutta in December 1929 in which all political parties were represented. Mr. Muhamad Ali Jinnah representing the Muslim League was there. Mr. M. R. Jayakar (afterwards Rt. Hon'ble Justice Jayakar) was there, Championing the cause of the Hindu. After a few articles were passed, it foundered when it came to the stage of fixing the percentage of Muslim representation in the Central Legislature, Mr. Jayakar speaking for the Hindus limiting the percentage to 25 percent and Mr. Jinnah claiming 30 percent for Muslims. Dr. Besant seemed to be not particular whether it was 25 or 30 per cent as long as 30 per cent was only a minority and would not make any difference. Muslim League's claims were subsequently improved and one point of difference developed into 14 points of difference which subsequently became bitter points of controversy in the subsequent Round Table Conferences which were held in London at which Gandhiji alone represented the Indian National Congress. A Commission was constituted by British Government consisting of wholly Britishers under the Chairmanship of Lord Simon which was boycotted by both Indian National Congress, and National Home Rule League. A Government of India Act was passed by Parliament in 1935 which was not accepted by the National Congress or National Home Rule League. But Dr. Besant nevertheless, in spite of differences amongst political parties which stood in the way of framing of a Swaraj for India by Indians, continued to carry her campaign with unabated vigour in the Press, platform and political organizations. In June 1929 she gave a public lecture on India in Queen's Hall, London, in her 82nd year. Subsequently her health began to fail and she passed away on 23—9—1933.

Going through the above narration, often a thought may occur to our minds whether if all the political parties joined their forces in support of Commonwealth of India Bill framed under her guidance and presented to Parliament in 1925 we would not have gained our Independence earlier and without the partition of India into two independent countries. But it is useless to speculate upon what would have happened otherwise than what has actually happened.

Many events have occurred between 1925 and September 1947 when Indian Independence was recognized at long last by Britain—such as Round Table Conferences, Act of 1935, The Second World War, Gandhiji's 'Quit India' Movement, Cripp's Mission, British Cabinet proposals, Viceroy's Joint Council of Congress and Muslim League Representatives, Allies' victory in war, founding of United Nations Organization, separation of India and Pakistan attended by evacuation of former by Muslim and the latter by Hindus with attendant atrocities and Attainment of India's Freedom. What contributions did subsequent events make to the attainment of that Freedom is a matter for the consideration of the sober historian, after the clouds of prejudice, passion and partisanship have passed away.

But the work of Dr. Besant in the political history of India from 1913 to 1929 is an outstanding example of what a mighty heroic spirit worked for and achieved towards the consummation of the attainment of India's Freedom whose constitution India's representatives framed after attaining Freedom while India still remains a free member of the Indo-British Commonwealth of Nations as planned by Dr. Besant. It would be useful and inspiring to the citizens of India to cherish with love and gratitude the lessons offered by her work forming a splendid chapter in the history of the attainment of India's Freedom.

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